

June 17, 2015

Honorable Judge Richard J. Sullivan
U.S District Court, Southern District of New York
40 Foley Square
New York, NY 10007

Dear Judge Sullivan:

I write to you today with great humility and remorse to ask that, for the sake of my beloved family whom I care for with all my heart, you show leniency in my sentencing. I have pled guilty to a felony and, for the past 15 months, have carried on my shoulders the heavy burden of the crimes that I committed. Every day, I look back at the poor choices that I made and how they have negatively impacted my family, the investigations industry, my clients and myself. The pain and suffering that I have caused my loved ones and anyone affected is irreversible. The ramifications of what I have done can never be taken back, and I am ashamed that my two young sons have had to witness their father's helplessness and hopelessness during my dark times. Although I think they are too young to understand, my (6) year old son, no longer asks me "why are you crying" but just hugs and kisses me. Unfortunately, he does understand my pain to some degree. I hope that my acceptance of responsibility for the crimes I committed serves as an example to my children and an important life lesson for them. My kids like to role play as "cops", Christopher talks about being a Police Officer, and following in my brother's footsteps. It will be so difficult to one day explain to my kids that I am a convicted felon.

My children, Christopher (age 6) and Gabriel (age 4 - turning 5 on June 24, 2015), are my life. My wife, Anna, who has been my best friend since high school, works full time in the corporate world, so I have been their primary caregiver since their birth. I volunteer at my children's school as well as with organizations like the *Polly Klaas Foundation* to help find missing children, attend PTA meetings, chaperone school trips, and accompany my sons to almost all of their afterschool activities. Christopher is a December baby, making him one of the youngest students in his class, which causes him to struggle with learning and adapting to things like "common core math" and reading. No father wants to see his child fall behind, so I spend at least an hour a day practicing and studying with him. I want nothing more than to give my boys the nurturing parenting that I never received. Now, I feel like an endless failure to them due to my crimes resulting in my felony plea. How could I lead by example when I am now a felon? I suppose that the best lesson I can pass on to them is that "no one is exempt from the law, and there are serious consequences for those who feel they are"!

There is absolutely nothing I would not do for my boys. I have made every effort to be an exemplary and involved father, particularly since my own father left when I was 14 years old. I know what it is like to be a young Hispanic man growing up in New York City without a father. It is terrible that I have become yet another statistic—a minority father from a broken home, raised by a single alcoholic mother, and now facing incarceration—preparing to miss out on the important days of his young children's lives. I also fear that I will not be there for my mother and 93-year-old grandmother, both of whom are in poor health and rely on me solely for their care and financial support. I am their only next of kin living in New York. But the

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circumstances I am in are no one's fault but my own, and I am struggling mentally and physically to prepare to face the consequences, whatever they may be.

Over the past 15 months, I have been consumed with guilt, extreme anxiety, and humiliation over the actions that have led me to this point. The mental anguish that I feel has led me to seek weekly counseling and psychiatric help. For the past months, I have relied on the aid of anti-depression and anti-anxiety medications, to get through the day. In addition to a decline in my mental health, I feel my physical health problems worsen. I have a history of hypertension for over ten years, and I also suffer from Supraventricular tachycardia (SVT), a condition that makes my heart beat too fast because of faulty electrical signals. Several years ago, I underwent a procedure to remedy this arrhythmia, but it was not successful. I am diligent with my medications, and I exercise carefully to avoid any SVT episodes, but this is a problem that I will have to deal with for the rest of my life. I also have a vascular malformation in my brain (an Arteriovenous Malformation or AVM) which periodically causes cerebral hemorrhaging. This is an abnormal cluster of blood vessels connecting arteries and veins in my brain. Any trauma to my head would be deadly. The combination of hypertension and AVM can be life-threatening, as the high blood pressure can cause the AVM to rupture and bleed into my brain. With my heightened anxiety, I blood pressure has been difficult to manage. I am currently working with several doctors to keep these medical issues under control, but my overall health has declined and I fear to fall ill to the heredity heart disease which warranted by brother's heart transplant at the age of 40.

With an intended goal to help people in need, I far overstepped what was legal. I should have known better, and yet I chose the wrong path. Although my actions did not cause anyone any monetary losses, I still violated the trust of my community, the people who respected me, the government, and the law. I am embarrassed by my lack of good judgement and take full responsibility for my actions.

Although I deeply regret the decisions I made, I know in my heart that under many circumstances I committed crimes in an effort to do something good for those in need. For example, in one particular case, a man [REDACTED] contacted me after having hired two well-known private investigators who failed to produce positive results. Mr. [REDACTED] did a convincing job of portraying himself as a helpless victim who had been scammed out of \$150,000 by his ex-fiancé. In an effort to help this victim, I intruded into Mr. [REDACTED]'s ex-fiancé's email account without his knowledge. Upon reviewing the materials that I came across, I quickly realized that Mr. [REDACTED] had not been truthful with me and was, in fact, a stalker and dangerous. I felt that the information in my hands would have caused harm to his ex-fiancé. Therefore, I made the decision to cease the investigation, never shared any information with him regarding what I did or found and I never requested nor accepted any compensation from Mr. [REDACTED]. Instead, I sent an anonymous letter to his ex-fiancé warning her of his attempts to stalk her and to obtain her new residential address. I later found out that my instincts about this case had been correct—According to the New York Post, Mr. [REDACTED] was arrested in 2015 for threatening his girlfriend with a butcher knife. Despite the illegality of my actions, I take solace in the fact that I may have protected a potential victim from serious harm.

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On most occasions, I spent my own resources to obtain information that never had potential for financial gain. For instance, several cases came across my desk that involved child molestation and abuse. When conventional methods failed, I did resort to using hacking services, and some of these services aided in the protection of children. The gain for me in these cases was not financial; it was personal, as I thought of my own children and their vulnerability. It was this type of thinking, however, that clouded my judgement and allowed me to begin using these services in the first place. Now I am left with a lifetime of regret as I cope with the fallout of my actions.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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The stress and shame that I have caused my family, peers, and extended loved ones is irreparable, and the ramifications of what I have done are permanent. Pleading to a felony will forever alter my life. The loss of my private investigator's license has diminished my opportunities to financially support my family. The decreased viability of my business and the lack of trust from colleagues are just a few of the consequences of my actions. What hurts just as much is the stigma I will feel in my community. I value my position as a volunteer for my children's schools and sporting activities and the *Astoria Homeowners and Tenants Association*, and now I must withdraw myself from many of the positions I hold. I am embarrassed and saddened by the lifelong consequences I've brought upon myself by committing a felony. I am embarrassed and very remorseful to the victims whose privacy I violated. I wish I could undo any distress they may feel once they learn of my actions.

A client of mine, a single father, recently asked me for advice regarding the purchase of online spyware which he intended to use on his new girlfriend. This man had just gone through a horrible divorce and had lost all trust in women. I *begged* him to please think of the consequences that any illegal actions could have on him and to think of his son! I shared my story with him, telling him that this happened to a "friend of mine", as I was too ashamed to divulge the truth to him.

I humbly pray that you will provide me with the opportunity to redeem myself. If I am granted freedom, I promise to coach those with less guidance. Such freedom, even while under supervision, would permit me to pick up the pieces of my life and move forward to work harder and provide for my family in a legitimate fashion. I have a lot to make up for and I am eager to rebuild my life. I want nothing more than to be a better example to my children each and every day. I will use every moment I have with them to steer them away from any unlawful activity and guide them to a better life than I have led. My wife, mother, grandmother, and children have suffered tremendously for no reason other than my own ignorance, and any period of incarceration would destroy them. I leave it in God's hands and in your hands to please sentence me to no period of incarceration and give me the opportunity to continue to be present for my family. I want to be a productive member of society. I humbly beg for your forgiveness and consideration.

With Gratitude,

Eric Saldarriaga